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Human rights questions: implementation of human rights instruments

Status of the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families

Report of the Secretary-General

1. The General Assembly, by its resolution 45/158 of 18 December 1990, adopted and opened for signature, ratification and accession the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families and called upon all Member States to consider signing and ratifying or acceding to the Convention as a matter of priority.

2. In its resolution 53/137 of 9 December 1998, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to provide all the facilities and assistance necessary for the promotion of the Convention through the World Public Information Campaign for Human Rights and the programme of advisory services in the field of human rights; invited the organizations and agencies of the United Nations system and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations to intensify their efforts with a view to disseminating information on and promoting understanding of the Convention; and requested the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly at its fifty-fourth session an updated report on the status of the Convention. A similar resolution, resolution 1999/45 of 27 April 1999, was adopted by the Commission on Human Rights.

3. As at 31 August 1999, the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families has been ratified or acceded to by Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Cape Verde, Colombia, Egypt, Mexico, Morocco, the Philippines, Senegal, Seychelles, Sri Lanka and Uganda and signed by Bangladesh, Chile and Turkey. The Convention will enter into force when at least 20 States have ratified or acceded to it.

4. Promotion of the international human rights treaties, including the Convention, is an ongoing priority of the Secretary-General and the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. In a follow-up to their 1997 appeal to Governments urging ratification of the treaties, the Secretary-General and the High Commissioner sent a joint letter to heads of Governments on 19 January 1999, to which some positive responses have already been received.

5. By signing a memorandum of understanding with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights in March 1998, the United Nations Development Programme has also agreed to promote ratification of the human rights treaties, including the Convention. Pursuant to the memorandum, a joint programme, entitled "Human rights strengthening" (HURIST) has been developed to

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promote human rights at all levels: global, regional and subregional. One of the components of HURIST specifically aims at the promotion of ratification through activities such as subregional workshops. Several such workshops are planned for the end of 1999 and in the course of 2000.

6. In addition, the International Steering Committee of the Global Campaign for Ratification of the Convention on Rights of Migrants, which was formed in March 1998 for the purpose of building and popularizing a global campaign to promote the ratification and entry into force of the Convention, continued its activities, including through its national counterparts. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights participated in and supported this initiative.